[Shri Brahamanand Mandal]

I, therefore, urge upon the Minister of Tourism to declare Monghyr as tourist centre and provide adequate financial assistance to develop it as a tourist centre of international repute.

(viii) Need to take concrete steps to stop poaching of Leopards and Tigers

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal) : According to a WWF - India Study, leopards in the country are facing a threat to their existence more than ever before due to unabated poaching. The sources say that 262 leopard skin had been seized from verious parts of the country between July 1993 and January 1995. The leopard skin is being sold without any check in tourist spots such as Kullu, Manali, Dharmashala in Himachal Pradesh, Darjeeling in West Bengal, Surat in Gujarat and in Shimilipal in Orissa. The matter has been raised in various forums by different prominent individuals and the Members of Parliament. But very little has been done to check suck illegal trade.

Skins and bones of tiger and leopard are in great demand in the underground market in Calcutta and several other cities. These are in great demand as substitutes for tiger parts command lucrative prices. As a substantial number of leopards are found outside the network of protected areas, they are vulnerable to poaching. According to the census done in 1993 the leopard population stands double than that of the tiger. The number of tigers in the country was 3750 whereas leopards was 7500 according to the census of 1993. But the rate of leopard poaching has increased five times during the period mentioned above.

Unless deforestation activities are stopped, the leopard will continue to fall prey to the poachers. I urge upon the Government of India to ask the State Government for proper preservation of existing forest and also to undertake appropriate and adequate afforestation measures forthwith so as to stop poaching of leopards and tigers.

14.55 hrs.

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (GENERAL)—1997-98-*Contd.*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, let us move on to item No. 7 of the list of Business, that is, further discussion on Demends for Supplementary Grants (General).

In this respect I want to inform the hon. Members of this House that the time allotted for this discussion was two hours and we have already taken one hour and 57 minutes. We have got only three minute left. On the other hand, at least, there are about nine Members to participate in the discussion. Therefore, I request all the speakers to be very brief so that the hon. Minister of Finance can complete this business of the House and refer it to the other House.

I would further request that every speaker should confine himself to the Budget papers.

Prof. Om Pal Singh Niddar was on his legs.

[Translation]

PROF. OMPAL SINGH 'NIDAR' (Jalesar) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, yesterday when I started speaking, immediately another matter was taken up. As per your calculation if I speak for 10 seconds, 3 minutes time will be over. I am speaking on budget for the first time and, therefore, I would like to take a few more minutes.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was saying that our Government wants to get approval for buying opium worth Rs. 60 crore. I could not understand that. On the one hand, they make efforts to enforce prohibition and on the other hand, a large quantity of opium is seized and if that quantity is exported, foreign exchange worth rupees sixty crores could be earned. I could not understand it. Apart from it, demand no. 14 pertains to the Department of Tele-Communications for which a provision of Rs 26060.96 crores has been made and even then the position of this Department is not good and, perhaps, the members belonging to the ruling as well as opposition parties will agree to it. No norms or policy is being followed in this department and the people are compelled to pay bribes to get their work done. Such is the situation in the society which should be checked and the work should be monitored.

Demand no. 22 relates to the forest and environment. I don't understand what the Government wants to do for environment. There are 80 many people in this country, who do not feel necessary to set up industry under American pressure or of their own. Small scale industries earn a lot of foreign exchange and provide employment to crores of people. There is a racket. I am not levelling allegations against anyone but the Constituion is being violated. A number of small scales industries are being closed down in the name of enviroment and Government is watching as mute spectator. There is no persuation. Nobody raises question in this regard. Great injustice is being done to Ferozabad, Etah, Mathura, Bharatpur and Dhaulpur districts in the name of protecting Taj Mahal. I do not know whether Government has any project to save there cities from pollution. I feel that those who are themselves